Sidelights

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2026
Volume 69 Issue 8 https://southfloridaregion.aaca.com





(go to page 6)

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2nd Vice-President, Program Chair	Jorge Salazar
Interim Secretary	Alexander Clay
Treasurer	Manny Garcia

Immediate Past President, Safety Officer, Sergeant at Arms TomásHernández

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SIDELIGHTS

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2026

Volume 69 Issue 8

Jean Hawa, Editor

aacasouthfloridaregion@gmail.com

Sidelights is the official publication of the South Florida Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America.

It has been published continuously since June 1958. The paper informs members of local and state activities, club functions, meeting dates and has articles of general interest for the car enthusiast. All articles and stories may be reproduced if proper credit is given.

The views and opinions expressed in the articles in *Sidelights* are those of the named author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, the Board of Directors of the A.A.C.A. South Florida Region or members of the club.

CONTENTS

AACA National/Region Events	16
Board Minutes (October)	4-5
Bylaws	11
Club/National Calendar	20
Cover, Club Rally	1, 6-8
Editor's Notes	3
General Membership Meeting	9-10
IMPORTANT NOTICE	12
Membership Renewals	12
Memoriam	13
Other Events	16
President's Message	3
Rummage Box	14
Slate of Officers and Directors	5
Social Media	2
South Florida Region Events	16
Sunshine Report	16
Supporters	15
Wanted Stories	15

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH OUR HOBBY:

https://aaca.org

AACA South Florida Region

https://southfloridaregion.aaca.com

aacasouthfloridaregion@gmail.com

Facebook

Instagram from Meta

AACA.SOUTH.FLORIDA

Fellow Members and Friends,

Can you believe it? Here I am, writing my final President's Message of 2026! It seems like just yesterday we were welcoming the new year, and now we're getting ready to wrap up another exciting chapter in our club's history.

What a year it has been! Filled with great activities, beautiful cars, memorable outings, and, most importantly, the camaraderie and friendships that make our club so special. I truly believe we accomplished many of our goals, and I sincerely hope we managed to put a smile on everyone's face along the way. After all, that's what this club family is all about!

One of our most recent highlights was "The Naples Rally," undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable and rewarding driving tours we've organized. Personally, seeing the enthusiasm, smiles, and excitement among the participants was incredibly satisfying. There's nothing quite like watching a caravan of beautiful classics rolling down the road with their proud owners enjoying every mile! Be sure to read more about this wonderful adventure in the pages of Sidelights.

Our October membership meeting at Frankie's Pizza was another great success, proving once again that we don't always need a fancy venue to have a fantastic time. Good pizza, great company, and plenty of car talk—what more could we ask for? It's all part of our ongoing efforts to diversify our activities and offer something enjoyable for everyone's tastes and interests.

And don't think we're slowing down just because the year is coming to an end! We still have plenty of fun ahead, including the Central Presbyterian Church Car Show and Toy Run, the Deering Estate Vintage Car Show, our next general membership meeting at an exclusive private car collection, and, of course, our much-anticipated Holiday Party at the Miami Outboard Club. So polish those beauties, mark your calendars, and come join the fun!

On another important note, please don't forget about our upcoming club elections. Your participation is essential to keeping our organization strong, active, and moving forward. Remember, this is your club, and every member has a voice in its future.

Also, be sure to stay connected through our club website, social media platforms, and our newly created WhatsApp group. This latest addition has quickly become a wonderful way to share information, exchange ideas, enjoy a few laughs, and stay in touch with fellow members. And for that, you can thank our hardworking First Vice President! Just another example of how we're finding new ways to bring our club family closer together.

Also, be sure to stay connected through our club website, social media platforms, and our newly created WhatsApgroup. This latest addition has quickly become a wonderful way to share information, exchange ideas, enjoy a few laughs, and stay in touch with fellow members. And for that, you can thank our hardworking First Vice President! Just another example of how we're finding new ways to bring our club family closer together.

As we approach the holiday season, I want to take a moment to thank our Officers, Board of Directors, volunteers, and every one of you for your continued support, participation, and friendship. Without you, all these wonderful activities would simply be ideas on paper.

Here's to another year of great memories, miles of smiles, and the wonderful friendships that keep our classic car engines-and-our club- running strong!

Cheers,
Your President Al Padilla



Perhaps you have heard of Murphy's Law: "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong." This editor found out the hard way that it is a true adage. Here's the short version of a two-week nightmare of why *Sidelights* is late this time. Ever since this editor learned that her beloved Microsoft Publisher program was being discontinued October 1st, every important document was backed up. The first two weeks in October of weeks went smoothly until the computer stopped working. One-third of the November/December *Sidelights* issue was completed and everything was working perfectly, awaiting the pictures and reports from the Naples Rally and Lake Mirror Car Show. Then the computer froze. Two days later, the diagnosis: the CPU was history, buy a new computer, two days to transfer the files. Once home I found out that it wasn't easy to download the programs like Excel, Word, etc., called the professionals to schedule an in-home service appointment. Then the major disaster hit. When Microsoft was installed every saved Publisher document became obsolete. Back to square one. It's a very slow process to start over from scratch.

Webmaster Ed Medina came to the rescue by suggesting Canva. It's another "language" to learn and definitely not as easy as the former Publisher, but right now it'll have to do. It's baby steps; two steps forward and one step back. (Hint, there will be discrepancies with spacing and font sizing).

From my family to your family, may your holiday season be full of love, laughter, and happiness. If you are planning a motor trip, please drive defensively!

Happy motoring,

Jean

BOARD MINUTES: OCTOBER 6, 2026

The AACA South Florida Region Board Meeting of October 6, 2026 was called to order by President Al Padilla at 7:32 p.m. at La Caretta Restaurant.

In Physical Attendance: Al, Manny, Millie, Junior, Jorge, Alex, Tony, Mike, Ira, Tom, and Ben
By Phone: Ed and Angel. President Padilla was able to establish a quorum with 13 members of the board present.

Executive Record: The board approved the prior meeting minutes, reviewed the August and September finances, reported 227 member families, and confirmed the fall event calendar. Planning advanced for the December Holiday Party and Art Deco Weekend, while permit, sponsorship, and participation issues remained active follow-ups.

Formal appointment: Alejandro Clay was unanimously appointed interim secretary and will be placed on the officer slate for the upcoming election of officers and board of directors.

Approvals and Officer Business:

Prior minutes: Approved following a motion and second.

Interim Secretary: Ed moved to appoint Alejandro Clay, Tony seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

One officer resigned for medical reasons, leaving two open positions on the published slate. The slate had been updated in Sidelights, by email, and on the club website. Alejandro will serve in the interim role until the membership election.

Financial and Membership Reports:

Financial: August reconciled balance- $32,958.01; September reconciled balance- $34,165.50
The treasurer presented two months of reporting because the prior month's report had not been ready.

Membership: The club has 227 member families. Renewals for 2027 are underway. Two families have confirmed that they will not renew because they moved away.

Participation: Low rally participation was raised as a concern. Approximately five board members had registered, and Generation Old School participation was limited.

Upcoming Events: General Meetings and Rally:

-**October General Meeting**
The next general meeting is scheduled for October 15 at Frankie's Pizza. The date falls immediately before the Lake Mirror event weekend; the board noted the scheduling issue but did not change the meeting date.
-November Meeting and Election
The November general meeting is scheduled for November 21 at Guy Lewis's home. The election of officers and board of directors will be held at that meeting.

-Naples Rally
The rally was scheduled for the coming weekend. At the time of the meeting, 26 members had responded and 28 hotel rooms had been reserved under the group code. The board requested a list of participating unit members and again encouraged stronger participation.
-Deering Estate Show
The show is scheduled for November 15. Thirty-four cars were registered at the time of the meeting, with registration still open. Registration did not guarantee acceptance; organizers were expected to prioritize pre-war vehicles over cars from the 1950s and 1960s.
-**Holiday Party**
The party is confirmed for December 12. The venue is set, while menu selections, event budget, and entertainment remain to be finalized. Ticket prices: $30 for members and $60 for non-members, unchanged from last year. Menu: The event lead will circulate menu choices and pricing to the board. Budget: Prior event budgets will be shared so
before the Lake Mirror event weekend; the board noted the scheduling issue but did not change the meeting date.

-**National Election**
The AACA ballot includes ten nominees, and seven must be selected for the ballot to count. Family memberships may include separate member and spouse ballots.

Club Business:
-Art Deco Weekend layout requires agency review. Meg, the Art Deco organizer, proposed placing vehicles on the 11th through 14th Streets of Ocean Drive, with the jazz stage near 12th Street. The proposal could provide contiguous parking, but the board was concerned about reduced foot traffic and more difficult staging from Collins or Washington Avenues.

The club will raise the following points before agreeing to a layout:

- Approvals: Confirm police and fire department acceptance of the revised plan.
- Staging: Consider using 10th Street as a holding block to avoid traffic backup.
- Flow: Evaluate entering from the north and exiting south on Ocean Drive so an organized parade exit remains possible.
- Scale: Plan for approximately 160 cars across two days, with Sunday potentially exceeding 100 cars.
- Hours: Maintain the traditional 3:00 p.m. departure rather than extending to 4:00 PM.
- Volunteers: Set clear expectations for respectful communication and coordinated assignments. Jorge planned to meet with Meg before the end of the week if schedules permitted, then send the board a complete email update. The discussion was exploratory; no final layout decision was made.

-**Biltmore Way Show Permit Remains in Progress**. The permit application had been submitted. Ed and Ben were scheduled to meet by Zoom with the city director in the coming weeks, with other board members welcome to join. The remaining issues include parking dispensation, possible barrier charges, and the requested insurance addendum. Richard Heisenbottle was working through city contacts on parking. The board also noted that the annual judged show is among the club's most expensive events and would benefit from additional sponsors.
(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)

Sponsorship, Picnic, and Future Events

·Sponsorship: John Kiskinis was pursuing several leads, but nothing was confirmed. The arrangement creates no cost to the club if no sponsor is secured.

·Picnic recap: The event was well received. Against a not-to-exceed budget of $1,500, spending totaled $1,326.20. The club collected $270, leaving net out-of-pocket expense of $1,056.20. Alternative venues and cooler timing were suggested for 2027.

·Cars in the Garden: No new information or date was available; the item was tabled.

Follow through Actions and Closing Record Action Items:

Action Items

1. Jorge - Art Deco Weekend: Review approvals, staging, flow, car count, volunteers, and the 3:00 p.m. departure with Meg; email the board afterward.

2. Holiday Party Lead: Circulate menu prices and explore a DJ within budget. 2

3. Finance Support: Share prior holiday party budgets.

4. Ed and Ben - Show Permit: Confirm the Zoom meeting and report on parking, barriers, and insurance.

5. Membership and Board: Encourage stronger event participation. 5

6. Responsible Officer: Pay outstanding national dues.

7. Board/Website Team: Continue evaluating low-maintenance member classifieds.

Member Classifieds Remain Under Study

The board discussed offering member vehicle listings through the website and Sidelights. Ideas included a free introductory period, paid placement, broader promotion through social media, and member-only access to seller contact information. Because the club website primarily serves current members, the board questioned likely reach and the workload required. No program or fee was approved. Any viable approach should allow members to upload their own photos and descriptions, with limited review by the website team.

Sunshine Report:

The board shared health updates concerning Cindy Goldsmith, Chico Goldsmith, Maurice Hawa and Ira Shapiro, and extended support and wishes for their recovery.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made, and the meeting concluded at 8:41 p.m. EDT

Respectfully submitted,
Millie Garcia, Substitute Secretary



NOMINATIONS

Officers: These five officers are up for election at the 2026 November General Meeting to serve a one-year term in 2027:

OFFICERS

1. President ……Al Padilla
2. 1st Vice President……Ed Medina
3. 2nd Vice President……Jorge Salazar
4. Secretary……Alejandro Clay
5. Treasurer……Manny Garcia

DIRECTORS

The following directors are subject to election. They will be finishing the second year of a two-year term that commenced in January 2025.

6. Chico Goldsmith
7. Jean Hawa
8. Ira Shapiro
9. Benjamin Cardonne
10. Tom Kosky
11. OPEN POSITION –

The following directors are NOT subject to election. They will be serving the second year of a two-year term that commenced January 2026.

12. Mike Penn
13. Millie Garcia
14. Alejandro Clay
15. Anthony Hernandez
16. Angel Aulet
17. Junior Valdes

These two-board members are automatic positions:
18. Guy Lewis…… Of Counsel
19. Tomás Hernández - Immediate Past President

SAVE THE DATE! ELECTIONS
Thursday, November 19, 2026
at 7:30 p.m.
LOCATION: La Caretta Restaurant
8650 SW 40 Street
Miami, FL 33155
Dinner is at 6:30 p.m.



NAPLES RALLY 2026

October 22, 2026 By Ed Medina

The Naples Rally (cruise) just took place on October 10th. It was an amazing day for the club members to enjoy their vehicles on a great cruise. The members met at the old Dade Corners gas station on Tamiami Trail and Krome Avenue. Then they took off for their enjoyable drive through historic Tamiami Rd heading west, making a lunch stop at Everglades City to enjoy time with friends and good food. The adventure continued after lunch as everyone drove to Naples and to the destination of REV's Automotive Museum. A spectacular history of automobiles and great tour guides. Some members stayed overnight at Naples at the Hyatt House who accommodated our members and parking for the cars, a few others ventured back home after the museum. If you were unable to attend, you missed an amazing experience and time with friends.

1960 Chevrolet Impala





Miriam and Al



R: 1947 Cadillac



1957 Oldsmobile



1956 Oldsmobile



R: 1959 Ford



Rossana and Alejandro are welcomed to the beginning of the Naples Rally by Chair Junior Valdes

PHOTO CREDITS
Al Padilla
Junior Valdez





L & R: 1949 MG TG EXU

Standing-L-R: Rossana, Clay, Francisco, Ed.
Clara inside the MG



1960 Chevrolet Impala

Below: The usual "ya gotta look under the hood".





1956 Buick



1955 Chevrolet

(continued on page 7)

The Naples Adventure: Classic Cars, Great Friends, and a Little Florida Rain!

By Al Padilla

An unforgettable two-day driving tour along the historic Tamiami Trail. What an incredible two-day adventure we recently enjoyed!

On the morning of October 10, members of the AACA South Florida Region, together with our friends from Generation Oldschool, gathered for a memorable driving tour to Naples, traveling along historic U.S. Highway 41, better known as the Tamiami Trail. For those unfamiliar with the origin of its name, here's a little Florida history. The Tamiami Trail was conceived as a roadway connecting Tampa and Miami, hence the combination of the two city names: Tampa and Miami. Officially opened in 1928, the Tamiami Trail was a remarkable engineering achievement that took approximately 13 years to complete. Originally envisioned in 1915, this ambitious project created a vital east-west connection between Miami and Naples through the challenging wetlands and swamps of the Everglades. It remains one of Florida's most historic and scenic highways.

Let the Adventure Begin!

Approximately 30 vintage and classic vehicles assembled at the Pilot Travel Center, a location affectionately remembered by many of us longtime South Florida residents as "Dade Corners." With everyone accounted for, we departed right on schedule, heading west toward Naples, with a planned lunch stop in Everglades City via Highway 29.

Leading our colorful caravan was Junior, one of our board members and the enthusiastic organizer of this adventure, proudly piloting his beautiful 1947 Cadillac convertible. I couldn't agree more with Junior's cheerful observation: "What a beautiful day to drive a convertible!" Well… somewhat! But more about that later.

Bringing up the rear as the designated sweep vehicle was yours truly, driving my 2023 Jeep Gladiator, fully equipped with a toolbox and floor jack, just in case any of our treasured classics needed assistance. I'm happy to report that neither was needed, as our entire caravan completed the journey without mechanical incidents. However, one of our senior members couldn't resist pointing out, with a smile, "You're cheating!" Apparently, driving a modern, air-conditioned Jeep while everyone else enjoyed the authentic vintage motoring experience was considered a bit of an unfair advantage!

A Journey Through Old Florida-

Between the occasional glance at fuel levels, oil pressure, and temperature gauges, our participants had the opportunity to appreciate the magnificent scenery along this historic route. The seemingly endless expanses of sawgrass stretched across the famous River of Grass, where water slowly makes its way southward from the Lake Okeechobee region toward Florida Bay. Along the way, we passed areas of the Miccosukee Tribe's homeland, with opportunities to observe alligators and the abundant birdlife inhabiting this unique ecosystem. To our north lay the vast wilderness of Big Cypress National Preserve, while to our south stretched the legendary Everglades National Park. It was truly a beautiful reminder of the natural treasures we have right here in South Florida. The weather couldn't have been better. Not a cloud in the sky accompanied us throughout most of our journey.

Upon arriving in Everglades City, we enjoyed a delicious lunchand, just as importantly, some wonderful time socializing withellow members and friends. After all, isn't that what these club adventures are really about?





Valdes family enjoying lunch on the water.



Blue 1957 Chevrolet
Red 1956 Mercury



(continued on page 8)

 (continued from page 7)

A Little Florida Surprise!

Our next destination was the renowned Revs Institute in Naples, home to one of the world's most impressive collections of historically significant automobiles. But Mother Nature apparently had a surprise waiting for us! As we approached the museum, those beautiful blue skies suddenly gave way to a tremendous Florida thunderstorm. One could consider it a complimentary car wash! Well, perhaps not everyone appreciated the free service equally. At least one convertible crew, consisting of a driver and copilot, arrived thoroughly drenched! When someone inquired about their canvas top, the response was priceless: "What top? We do this all the time!" Now, THAT'S the spirit of true classic car enthusiasts!



A Visit to the Spectacular Revs Institute

Rather than attempt to describe the museum entirely in my own words, I'd like to share some comments posted on our club's Facebook page by fellow participant Richard Whittington, who captured the experience beautifully: The Naples Rally to the Revs Museum. What a great way to spend a Saturday. I've been to many car museums and this one was one of the best I've seen. The museum is impeccable. The guides are friendly and knowledgeable. The cars are spectacular and wonderfully displayed."

Richard highlighted several extraordinary automobiles, including:

- Enzo Ferrari's 1962 Ferrari Superamerica
- 1963 Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport
- 1955 Jaguar D-Type
- 1962 Jaguar E-Type Lightweight

He went on to praise the fascinating histories and provenance of the approximately 100 automobiles in the collection, concluding: "This museum is a must see for any antique car enthusiast. Mr. Collier has done a great job with his museum." I couldn't agree more!

The Revs Institute is truly a remarkable destination, and one that every serious automotive enthusiast should experience at least once.

Great Company, Great Memories

Our overnight accommodations were provided by the Hyatt House / 5th Avenue, conveniently located near downtown Naples, historic Tin City, and beautiful Naples Bay, home to the popular Naples Princess dinner cruise. The evening and following morning offered plenty of free time for our members to explore the area, enjoy the local attractions, share a meal, or simply relax in the company of good friends.



And that, perhaps, was the greatest reward of our two-day adventure. Beyond the beautiful automobiles, scenic highways, outstanding museum, and even the unexpected Florida downpour, it was the friendship, camaraderie, and shared passion for our hobby that made this tour so special.

A sincere thank-you goes to Junior and everyone involved in organizing this wonderful event, as well as to our friends from Generation Oldschool for joining us and helping make the experience so memorable. These are the moments that remind us why we belong to this great club. Beautiful cars bring us together, but lasting friendships keep us coming back! Until our next adventure, keep those classics running, those wheels turning, and those smiles shining!

The following is a video of the cars en route.

GammaGrit-Video-Oct-17-2026-12-51AM.mp4





Al's Buick Century enhances the ad on the wall.

Early arrivals find a good parking spot, walk around looking at the cars, and join in on good conversations.



Cliff and Diane are beside Jorge's VW



The chrome on Alex's 1953 is stunning.

PHOTO CREDITS:
Jean Hawa
Al Padilla









We patiently wait to place our drink order and/or dessert as the staff prepares our pizzas.



(*continued on page 10)*

Now that it is Fall, darkness comes early. Fortunately, we saw a golden sunset, had no rain, enjoyed the various pizza slices, and the parking lot was well lit. It was the perfect evening to hold our dinner meeting. After hearing from the board members, the remainder of our time was spent talking about cars. Going to Frankie's was a nostalgic moment for those of us who have lived in Miami for a very long time.



President Al, First VP Jorge and Editor Jean talked about the upcoming events. The remainder of our time was spent talking about cars.











We were pleasantly surprised to see a lowered gas price at the gas station next door. Finally, some relief!

ARTICLE FOUR – ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION I: The Board of Directors shall consist of no more than nineteen (19) members to include a maximum of fourteen (14) Directors to include the immediate Past President and Club Counsel (if applicable) and five (5) Officers of the Region elected by the membership. The officers of the Region shall be a Regional President, First Regional Vice President, Second Regional Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. To be eligible to be elected to the Board of Directors he or she shall be a member in good standing for two (2) consecutive years with proven contributions to the operation of the club activities.

SECTION II: The Nominating Committee shall be comprised of five (5) members. The Regional President shall select the chairperson of the Nominating Committee. The remaining four (4) members shall be selected at the September general membership meeting by the membership.

SECTION III: The nominating committee shall present a recommendation of candidates for Officers and the Board of Directors at the October general membership meeting. The floor will be open for nominations from the floor at the October general membership meeting and closed prior to the election at the November general membership meeting. The Nominating Committee's slate and the candidates' names nominated, during the October meeting, will be published in the November issue of Sidelights.

SECTION IV: Members in good standing with the Region will be given proper notice of the election by means of Sidelights or Region's website. The election for officers and the Board of Directors shall take place at the November general membership meeting and members must be present to vote; there shall be no proxies or absentee ballots allowed. There shall be a secret written ballot, which will be collected and tallied by the Regional Secretary or designee.

SECTION V: All officers and members of the Board of Directors may succeed themselves with the exception of the President who may serve a maximum of two consecutive years.

SECTION VI: In the event of a resignation of an officer or Board member or vacancy on the Board of Directors, the President may choose to appoint a replacement to fill the vacancy until the next election.

ARTICLE FIVE – TERMS OF OFFICE

SECTION I: The elected officers of this Region shall be a Regional President, First Regional Vice President, Second Regional Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Officers are elected for terms of one year. The Office of President is restricted to a maximum of two consecutive years. The Board of Directors will consist of up to fourteen (14) members including the Immediate Past President and Club Counsel (if applicable). The Board of Directors shall be elected for a term of two years on a staggered basis– one-half of the Board shall be elected each year. The Officers and Directors shall be sworn into their office at the annual year- end holiday party, typically held in December.

ARTICLE SIX–DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION VI: THE REGIONAL SECRETARY shall:

A) Record, maintain and protect, and make available upon the request of a member, the minutes of all general meetings and special meetings if necessary.

B) Keep all votes of the general membership and the Board of Directors.

C) Act as the custodian of the club's logo and assure that it is used on club documents appropriately.

D) Perform other duties as appropriate of the Regional Secretary.

E) The minutes shall be stored electronically and will provide such records and minutes at meetings of the Board, general membership, and special meetings.

IMPORTANT EDITORIAL NOTICE

By Jean Hawa

Since the 1955 inception of our antique car hobby in Miami, Florida, there has been a natural evolution of changes, such as the name from Miami Old Car Club to the A.A.C.A. South Florida Region, becoming affiliated with the Antique Automobile Club of America in 1965; membership growth from 40 to 228; hosting many local neighborhood car shows to hosting five national meets (1991, 2010, 2011, 2020 and 2023); *Sidelights*, the official club publication in 1958; and the launching of our first website in 2001 by our first webmaster, Bob Squier.

In the beginning, *Sidelights* was typed on a manual typewriter, then onto an electric typewriter, and later, a computer. All issues were mailed. In 1998, Editor and then club President, Bob Mayer incorporated color printing and graphics. In the many decades that *Sidelights* has been published, several changes have occurred behind the scenes. Technology allowed photos and written documents to be transferred electronically. hand drawn illustrations were replaced with photographs; newly drafted newsletters were hand delivered or mailed to a printer, and today they are electronically sent to a printer; and earlier issues were mailed whereas they are mailed or sent electronically to our members and supporters since 2001.

Over the past several years the cost of printing and mailing of *Sidelights* have escalated to an uncomfortable level. In addition to this fiscal issue, post office deliveries (or rather non-deliveries) have become more inconsistent. As a result, the Board of Directors on November 3, 2026 voted to have the November-December 2026 issue become the final mailed issue. Of course, *Sidelights* will continue to be posted on our club website as currently done since 2001. As in the past several months all members will be receiving *Sidelights* digitally via their email address. For those of you who only want to read your newsletter in your own hands, you can always print it from your computer.



SAVE THE DATE!
IT'S ELECTION NIGHT

Thursday, November 19, 2026 at 7:30 p.m. Membership Meeting at La Caretta Restaurant 8650 SW 40 Street, Miami 33155
If you want dinner, come at 6:30 p.m.

As seen in *SPEEDSTER* 2027 AACA Membership Renewals Start Soon
By Karen White, AACA Membership Manager
kwhite@aaca.org

As most of you know, your AACA membership runs for a calendar year – January 1 through December 31.

Beginning September 1, you can start using our super easy online membership renewal. Renewing online is quick and simple! Just log in with your membership number and PIN number, review the information currently listed on your membership record and make changes if necessary. Payment options include Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Your payment will automatically record to your membership record, and you will receive a confirmation email receipt.

Your membership number and PIN number can be found on your membership card. **If you don't know your membership number and/or PIN number, you can email membership@aaca.org** or **call AACA National Headquarters at 717-534-1910. Please DON'T try to pay your dues by using the JOIN AACA tab. This WILL NOT renew your membership – instead, it will create a new one.**

2027 South Florida Region Membership Renewal Time

The information below was emailed to all members on 09/09/26. It's our busiest time of the year here at The South Florida Region AACA – it's membership renewal time! The first renewal notice for 2027 dues was included in the October mailing package of *Sidelights*.

Members can use the online renewal option on our website Renewing online is quick and easy! (preferred method). Just click enter the required information, review the information listed and make changes if necessary. Review your information one more time and select the payment option **Paypal or Credit Card** payment options include Visa, MasterCard, American Express or discover. Your payment will automatically update your membership record.

If you wish to pay by check you can attend one of our monthly **Membership Meetings** at which time we will be more than happy to assist you, or you can mail your check to the following:
Annual Fee **$45.00** Checks payable to **South Florida Region AACA.** If you want to mail your check refer back to the September 9th email from Ed Medina.

We thank you and appreciate your loyalty!



(December 31, 1940-October 18, 2026)

Ralph/Dad/Grandpa fought a long, hard fight, but he is now resting peacefully with The Lord.

Though we are heartbroken that he won't be with us here, we, his family and friends, are grateful that he is no longer in pain and is reunited with loved ones he has missed for so long. We know that he has been received with open arms and has no more earthly worries or pain. Ralph is survived by his beloved wife and best friend, his faithful and caring companion, Carolyn; his loving children: son, Bill (Rosemarie) Thiele and daughter, Tracy (Whit) Seelke; as well as four treasured grandchildren, Steven (Chantal) Thiele, Jared Thiele, Grayson Seelke, and Kate Seelke. He was looking forward to the upcoming February birth of his first great-grandchildren, twin boys. Ralph is also survived by many dear friends—if you were a friend of Ralph's, there is no doubt that you know how he felt about you and how much he treasured you.

Born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, Ralph started working very early in life, proudly having a paper route at age 10, as well as pumping gas and helping with other duties at a service station near his home starting at age 12. The gas station is likely where his love of cars was rooted. As a teen, he and his buddies became forever "car guys"—working on them and racing them. His passion for Cadillacs, specifically, began when he started at Central Cadillac as a parts department driver at the age of 18, and he quickly moved to being one of their youngest-ever salespeople. This began what would be a lifelong career in automotive sales. In 1960, at the age of 19, Ralph married his high school sweetheart, Kathy Eppley (now Atkins). Together they had two children, Bill and Tracy. In 1971, the family moved to Miami, Florida, where Ralph continued his career with Cadillac at Williamson Cadillac. Ralph and Kathy parted ways in 1977.

Since 1971, Ralph had been active in and committed to his home church, Christ The King Lutheran Church. Ralph was a Kiwanian for many, many years, and served as President of his local chapter. Ralph was also a very long-standing and assionate participant in the AACA (Antique Automobile Club of America) and The Gator V8ers. Ralph was always a top salesperson for Cadillac, receiving many top honors and awards during his nearly 30 years with the company. In 1986, Ralph struck out on his own in the car business. He opened Miami's Best Auto Sales and continued his love of buying and selling cars—meeting new people as well as developing deep relationships and friendships with his customers. Ralph never met a stranger anywhere he went.

Before Hurricane Andrew and a very serious spinal injury sidelined him a bit in 1992 at the age of 51, Ralph enjoyed playing on several teams in competitive softball leagues, running, working on and restoring cars, and basically living life at full speed.

In 1993, Ralph's good friend and customer, Clyde Hinson, introduced him to his beautiful daughter, Carolyn. It didn't take long before Ralph asked for Carolyn's hand in marriage. They were married on February 11, 1995, at Christ The King Lutheran Church in Pinecrest, Florida. Together, they traveled in their Blue Bird motorcoach to visit family and friends all over. They even took an extended road trip all the way from Miami up to Alaska—seeing everything and everyone possible in between. They enjoyed cheering on their grandchildren in every sport they played whenever they could, both in Florida and Georgia. They attended and participated in car shows all around the country, earning many awards and trophies for his beautiful automobiles. Ralph and Carolyn also attended John Marshall Class of 1959 and Runners Club reunions almost yearly in Cleveland. They enjoyed spending time at their home on Green Turtle Cay in the Bahamas whenever they could. During this time, Ralph and Carolyn also grew what would become his prized collection of classic cars, which he eventually and lovingly named "The Thiele Collection." Cars were a passion shared in every way with his son, Bill, and deeply appreciated by the entire family and all of his many friends. In 2021, to be closer to their children and grandchildren, Ralph and Carolyn purchased a beautiful new home and chose a permanent spot for The Thiele Collection in The Villages, Florida. In December 2025, they made the permanent move to their home in The Villages, where a new building was completed to house his magnificent car collection. He was so pleased with it, and we are so happy he saw it to completion.

-Classic cars and Lionel model trains
-His huge love for all of the many dogs in his life—mostly German Shepherds, but he loved all dogs. His incredible Donald Duck impersonation—he even fooled Cast Members at Disney World!
-His love for desserts—especially carrot cake and key lime pie with plenty of whipped cream!-His huge hat collection and his Ohio State sweatshirt!
-His great smile and happy eyes!
Over many years, and especially recently, Ralph and Carolyn needed considerable help to manage day-to-day. There was never a task too small or too monumental for these wonderful and caring humans to tackle for Ralph and Carolyn. We pray that all of them will continue to take great care of Carolyn for Ralph and for us whenever the rest of the family cannot be with her.

A Celebration of Life Service was held on October 31, 2026, at Christ The King Lutheran Church 11295 SW 57th Avenue, Pinecrest, FL 33156. In lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial donation in Ralph's honor to Christ The King Lutheran Church, or to one of your favorite charitable organizations. Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared online via Baldwin Brothers at obituaries.baldwincremation.com

REST IN PEACE RALPH, YOU WILL BE MISSED!

RummageBox



Unique Awards to Make Your Event Special

By Jack Harris

2026 VP AACA Finance and Budget

A unique way to make your local car show stand out from the rest is to create a special award to give out to the participants. We all go to a lot of car shows and receive plaques or trophies. With a little creativity and imagination, you can come up with a remembrance that highlights your event and gets people coming back in the future**.**

This might be based on where your car show is located or what type of event your car show is associated with. This September my Furnitureland Chapter of the NC Region is hosting our 42nd consecutive annual car show on the grounds of the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC. NCTM is located on the grounds of the former Southern Railway Maintenance Facility, which currently house a lot of train cars, cabooses & locomotives. As a result, we selected a rail theme for our award trophies. Each year we select a different type of rail car as our award. Many times we select an actual rail car which has recently been restored by the Museum.



A local furniture factory produces the blank award each year. I start out by creating a pattern which they use with their CNC router to cut the shape to be used that year from MDF. I then select a different color which they paint the blanks. Next step, I go to the local FastSigns franchise to have them develop a decal with the graphics and car show date, etc. to be applied on the train car. We have several work nights for our club members to complete the award plaques.

The result is a very unique award that people can take home to hang in a train order along the top of the wall in their garage. We also provide each of our sponsors with one of these train plaques, one of which has mounted them on the wall in his office. Another special example is a trophy I received from the Cape Fear Chapter of the NC Region. Several years ago they hosted their meet on the grounds of the Battleship North Carolina docked in Wilmington, NC.

The Battleship at that time was having to replace some of the original teak decking, and they were offering the old decking for sale. The Chapter snapped up some of this historic teak wood and created an amazing plaque for their show winners.



As an elementary school child, I remember the State raising the money to bring the Battleship North Carolina back to Wilmington. We had fundraisers at all the local schools across the state help complete the relocation. So to me, having a piece of historic battleship is so very special! It is one of my most special treasures hanging on the wall of my garage.

Another example is based on what the car show is part of. For many years, my Chapter hosted the car show at the Lexington, NC Barbeque Festival. This is a very big deal here in the South and one hundred thousand plus people attend the Festival. The car show is a big attraction and draws many people over for a look. We created trophy plaques for this event in the shape of a pig. We have had several variations over the years and everyone really looked forward to them. This can be as simple as purchasing small plaques from Hobby Lobby and adding a pig decal with the information on it, to ordering the plaques in a pig shape with decals applied.

As you can tell I am a frequent customer at FastSigns!



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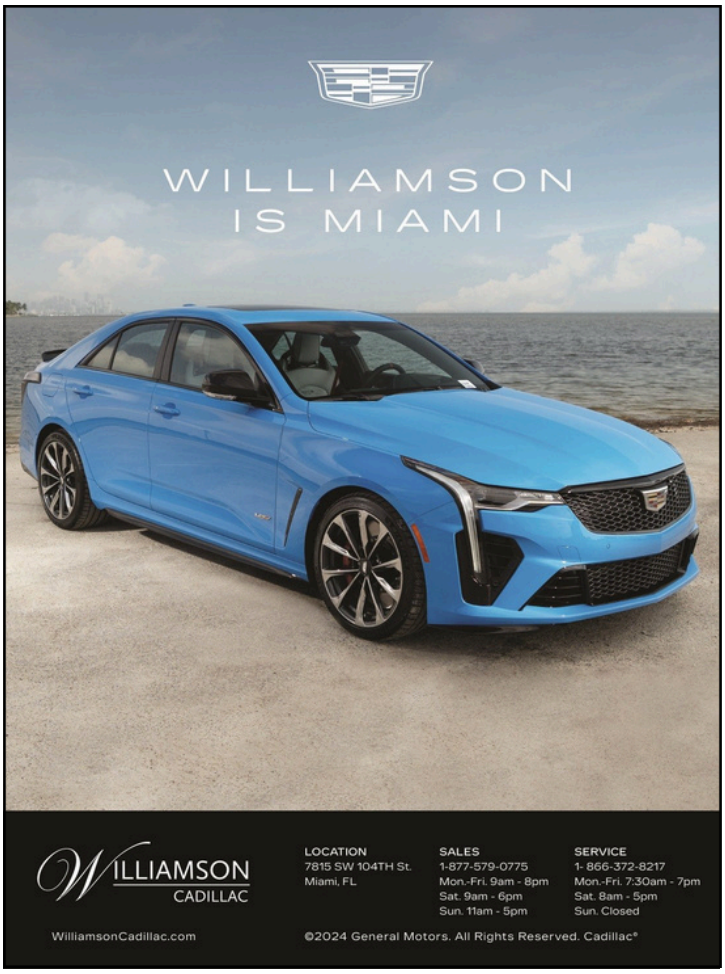

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WANTED:

Sidelights **needs your car stories, car pictures, accident and/or repair experiences, restoration project, childhood memories of you and a car/truck, etc. Do you have a story about a friend or relative regarding an antique? Do you have a "should've, would've, could've" story?**

Contact Editor Hawa at jmhawa@comcast.net

FROM:
A.A.C.A. South Florida Region
c/o Jean Hawa
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Pinecrest, FL 33156-3063

TO:

2026-27 SOUTH FLORIDA REGION EVENTS
Website: https:// southfloridaregion.aaca.com
(*for Online Registration)

NOVEMBER 2026

03- Board Meeting– 7:30 p.m. at La Carreta Restaurant, 8650 SW 40 Street, Miami 33155

***15- Deering Estate Vintage Auto Show–** for antiques 1965 and older, any International; must be pre-registered

19- General Membership Meeting/ELECTION NIGHT 7:30 p.m. at La Caretta Restaurant, 8650 SE 40 Street Miami 33155; if you are planning to dine-in, be there by 6:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 2026

NO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

05– *CPC-CLC Christmas Classic Car Show-10:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m., 12455 SW 104 St, West Kendall, Open car show- any vehicle pre-2001; Toy drive– bring new unwrapped toy.

***12- Holiday Party & Officer/Board Installation**: 6 p.m.-11 p.m; Miami Outboard Club, 1099 MacArthur Causeway, Miami Fl 33132; Members $30 PP; Guests-$60 Dress Code: Evening Chic; Sit Down Dinner; Must RSVP by December 6th. Go to club website to register and pay.

January 2027

05- Board Meeting- 7:30 p.m. at La Caretta Restaurant, 8650 SW 40 Stree, Miami, 33155

***17-18- ART DECO-Classic Car Fest-** Miami Beach

2026 OTHER EVENTS

November 14, 2026– LA6 Car Truck & Motorcycle Show St. Louis Catholic Church, 7270 SW 120 St, Pinecrest, FL 33156; Register now at: **https://buytickets.at/speedstyleandperformanceclub/2011623**

Cruise In (Shopping Center SW 89 Street & SW 162 Ave, Miami FL; generationoldschool.net; **https://www.generationoldschool.net;** Generation Oldschool @generation.oldschool) - Instagram**;** youtube.com/@generationoldschool espanol?si=Jdx1EGmJL5jE8kuc

December 5, 2026– GASPARILLA Cars in the Park Carrollwood Village Park, Tampa, FL, A CELEBRATION OF CARS, CLUBS & COMMUNITY. All Proceeds benefit Campions for Children. Reserve your place today: GASPARILLACONCOURS@YAHOO.COM;

2026-2027 AACA NATIONAL/OTHER REGION EVENTS

(check *Antique Automobile or* www.aaca.org for more information)

2026

November 7, 2026– Ft. Lauderdale Region AACA– St. Colman's Veteran's Day Car Show; 1200 South, S Federal Hwy., Pompano, FL; 10 AM-2 PM, $25- Open Car/truck show– all makes, models, years, original, custom; ftlauderdaleaaca@gmail.com

February 4-6, 2027 – Annual Convention/National Awards King of Prussia, Pennsylvania- 717-534-1910

February 18-20, 2027 – Winter Nationals – Melbourne, FL 717-534-1910

April 8-10, 2027- Southeastern Spring/Grand Nationals/ Zenith- Hornets Nest region- 704-847-4215

June 3, 2027- Eastern Spring Nationals- Fredericksburg, Virginia- Fredericksburg Region- 540-834-8120

SUNSHINE REPORT

Condolences have been sent to Carolyn Thiele, Bill Thiele, and Tracy Seelke for the passing of husband, son and daughter of Ralph Thiele.



Get well message sent to Jay Mullininx.

Congratulations are sent to Ira Shapiro for successively completing medical treatments.

Congratulations to the following for possible new members:

New parents - John and Madison Hermida for a son

New grandparents-

Tomas and Yovanna Hernandez for first grandson

Jay and Cheryl Mulinix for twin granddaughters